

## Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-09 H-02 INR-09 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-14 USIA-12 IO-12

T-03 OMB-01 DPW-01 AID-20 RSR-01 SR-02 ORM-03 /122 W

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R 210643 Z MAR 73

FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8944

USDEL FRANCE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAIGON 4615

E. O. 11652 GDS

TAGS: PINT PINS MILI VS

SUBJECT: SITREP FOR 20 MARCH 1973

QUOTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L CAN THO 0064

E. O. 11652): GDS

TAGS: MILI, PINT, VS

SUBJECT: SITREP FOR 20 MARCH 1973

1. SUMMARY: WHILE THE GVN AND NVA/ VC ARE LIMITING LARGE SCALE OPERATIONS, THE COMMUNIST ARE BRINGING INCREASING NUMBERS OF MEN AND SUPPLIES INTO THE NORTHERN DELTA. VC CONTINUE TO COLLECT TAXES AND TRY TO MOVE POPULATION INTO AREAS UNDER THEIR CONTROL. THE GVN IS ALSO RELOCATING PEOPLE IN THE DELTA TO BRING THEM MORE FIRMLY UNDER ITS CONTROL.

2. SECURITY:

A. ARVN DIVISION COMMANDERS HAVE REDUCED THE NUMBER AND SIZE OF THEIR OPERATION AS HAVE VC/ NVA MAIN FORCE UNITS. LOCAL FORCES OF BOTH SIDES ARE STILL ACTIVE, HOWEVER, ALMOST MAKING UP IN CASUALTIES IF NOT NOISE FOR THE RELATIVE QUIESCENCE OF THE BIGGER UNITS. IN CHUONG THVIEN, THE 21 ST DIVISION HAS DRASTICALLY CURTAILED ITS ACTIVITIES OVER RECENT WEEKS AND IS NOW RESPONDING ONLY TO VC/ NVA INITIATED INCIDENTS. JGS INSTRUCTED THE DIVISION TO OBSERVE THE CEASEFIRE " IN EARNEST" AND THIS IS WHAT IS HAPPENING. THE RELATIVE  
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INACTIVITY OF THE 21 ST DIVISION HAS NOT YET HURT THE GVN'S POSITION IN CHUONG THIEN BUT ITS CONTINUED INACTIVITY IN THE FACE OF INCREASING VC/ NVA LOCAL FORCE PRESSURE COULD ERODE THE GVN'S TENOUS HOLD ON THE PROVINCE. B. MR IV REPORTED VC/ NVA INCIDENTS VARY FROM 35 TO 45 PER DAY. ACTIVITY IS CONCENTRATED IN THE USUAL PLACES. THE HEAVIEST CONCENTRATION OF VC/ NVA FORCES IS NOW IN DINH TONG ( SIX REGIMENTS). GVN CASUALTIES ARE AVERAGING 15 KIA

AND 90 WIA PER DAY. VC CASUALTIES AVERAGE 50 KIA PER DAY.

4. COMMUNIST ACTIVITY:

A. MILITARY: WE HAVE SEVERAL FIRM REPORTS OF INCREASING COMMUNIST INFILTRATION OF MEN AND SUPPLIES INTO THE DELTA. MR IV, BASED ON RALLIER REPORTS, SAYS INFILTRATION IS COMING FROM THE SVEY RONG AREA TO THE BORDER BY TRUCK AND ACROSS INTO NORTHERN KIEN PHONG. AMERICAN MILITARY SOURCES DISAGREE, STATING THE SUPPLIES AND PERSONNEL ARE COMING FROM THE CHUP PLANTATION AREA THROUGH THE PARROT'S BEAK. AMERICAN SOURCES BELIEVE ONLY A PORTION OF THE INFILTRATION IS DESTINED FOR MR IV. WHATEVER IS ARRIVING IN MR IV SEEMS DESTINED FOR DINH TUONG, THE SCENE OF HEAVY VC/ NVA ACTIVITY LAST WEEK. THE KIEN HOA PROVINCE CHIEF HAS REPORTS INDICATING THE VC THERE HAVE RECEIVED AMMUNITION RESUPPLY FROM DINH TUONG RECENTLY, INCLUDING 107 MM ROCKET. THERE ARE RUMORS THAT BEN TRE WILL BE ROCKETED IN THE NEAR FUTURE. IF THE 107 MM ROCKET REPORT IS TRUE, THE BUILDUP WILL BE ONE OF THE FEW EVER TO TAKE PLACE IN THE DELTA. THE NUMBERS ARE PROBABLY SMALL.

B. POLITICALLY, THE VC TRIED TO ESTABLISH A " NEW" HAMLET LAST WEEK IN

A MINIBASE AREA OF TAM BINH DISTRICT, VINH LONG. CADRE AND LOCAL GUERRILLAS HELPED THE PEOPLE WHOM MOVED INTO THE AREA TO BUILD HOUSES. AN AMERICAN WHO FLEW OVER THE AREA ON MARCH 14 SAW MANY FULL SIZED BAMBOO HOUSES WITH TIN ROOFS AND NO GVN FLAGS. LAND IN THE AREA WAS BEING FARMED MORE THOROUGHLY THAN THREE MONTHS AGO WHEN HE LAST FLEW OVER THE AREA. VINH LONG SECTOR FORCES REACTED TO RD CADRE REPORTS OF THIS NEW HAMLET AND REPORTED THEY DESTROYED SIXTY HOUSES THERE IN A SECURITY OPERATION ON MARCH 14.

C. VC/ NVA TAX COLLECTION EFFORTS IN KIEN GIANG ARE REPORTED TO BE EXTENSIVE AND LUCRATIVE. IN KIEN TAN DISTRICT, THE VC SENT LETTERS TO FARMERS LEVYING TAXES AT  
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A RATE OF TWENTY GAI OF PADDY FOR EACH THREE HECTARS OF

RICELAND OR APPROXIMATELY 20,000\$ VN PER THREE HECTARES.  
THE VC/ NVA DEMANDED CASH AND WOULD NOT ACCEPT PADDY.  
REPORTEDLY THE VC/ NVA DO NOT ACTUALLY ENTER POPULATED AREAS  
TO COLLECT THE TAXES BUT SEND LETTERS TO THE FARMERS OR  
MEET THEM IN THE FIELDS.

5. GVN ACTIVITY: ADMINISTRATION: MR IV IS PLANNING  
TO RELOCATE APPROXIMATELY 7000 PEOPLE LIVING IN  
SCATTERED POPULATION CLUSTERS IN DINH TUONG. THE PEOPLE

WILL BE MOVED TWO OR THREE KILOMETERS FROM THEIR ORIGINAL  
HOME SITES IN RDHTO PLSM M# MORE FIRMLY UNDER GVN CON-

TROL. US REFUGEE SUPPORT WILL BE USED FOR THE  
PROJECTED MOVEMENTS. WE HAVE REPORTS THE GVN WILL SHUFFLE  
THE POPULATION IN KIEN HOA AND SHUONG THIEN XDDWELRDQB  
LWE HACU# REPORTED A PREVIOUS MOVE OF THIS KIND IN KIEN GIANG.  
( OUR MARCH 10 SITREP 0027)

WISNEN  
UNQUOTE  
BUNKER

NOTE BY OC/ T: SAIGON 4615. # AS RECEIVED. CORRECTION TO FOLLOW.

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\*\*\* Current Handling Restrictions \*\*\* n/a

\*\*\* Current Classification \*\*\* CONFIDENTIAL

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